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# Wisconsin Forestry Notes

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May 2003

Wisconsin DNR - Division of Forestry

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*“Some homes survived the Crystal Lake fire in Marquette County because the homeowners had a fair amount of green space around structures, creating a defensible space for firefighters to work in,” according to Division of Forestry fire officials.*

*“Defensible space” around a home protects the structure by reducing the amount of fuel that can burn around it. Draw an imaginary, 30-foot-wide belt around your home. If properly prepared, this area will become a zone of protection for your home.*

*The Division of Forestry is bringing “Firewise”, a program of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, to Wisconsin to encourage communities to pay attention to the factors that might start or encourage the spread of a wildfire.*

## Cooperative efforts handle forest fire emergency

The combined resources of 17 local fire departments and DNR working to stop a forest fire in northern Marquette County, protect people’s property, and prevent any loss of life kept a very bad situation from being worse last month. The Crystal Lake Fire began early in the afternoon of April 14 near the Lake of the Woods Campground, threatening 100 camper trailers in the campground and 24 homes and outbuildings in the area. Because of the intensity and location of the fire in this wildland urban interface, all fire department resources were immediately put on structural protection to try to preserve private property, homes and cottages. The Division of Forestry Forest Fire Command Center was activated to assist during this forest fire emergency that included the resources of local fire departments, DNR personnel, engines, tractor plows, air attack, single engine air tankers, and private bulldozers.

Dry and windy weather conditions, combined with highly flammable vegetation, resulted in explosive conditions when the wildfire began. The fire was finally contained that evening after 572 acres had burned. Crews were on the scene for three days extinguishing the fire and mopping up afterwards.

One cottage, three outbuildings, three camper-trailers, and various boats, canoes, and other equipment were destroyed. The loss of buildings to the fire was due, in part, to a lack of access (long, narrow driveways with minimal vertical clearance) and lack of defensible space (minimal space between the buildings and highly flammable vegetation).

Of the homes that survived, some made it because the homeowners had a fair amount of green space around structures, creating a defensible space for firefighters to work in. Homes that had less defensible space, but survived, were damaged by the radiant heat of the flames causing vinyl siding to melt and paint to blister.

Fire departments that provided structural protection and assistance in the suppression of Crystal Lake Fire include those from Coloma, Hancock, Harrisville, Montello, Neshkoro, Oxford, Red Granite, Tustin, Wautoma, Wild Rose, Newton, Plainfield, Poi Sippi, Saxeville, Springfield, Westfield and West Bloomfield. Emergency Management from both Marquette and Waushara Counties were on the scene, along with the Red Cross. Four WCC crews (Wood County, Clark County, Necedah and Wildcat Mountain), the UW-Stevens Point Fire Crew and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife crew provided needed hand crews and assisted with mop up. Law enforcement units from the Sheriff’s Departments in Marquette and Waushara Counties, the Wisconsin State Patrol, and DNR Conservation Wardens coordinated the evacuation, road closures and law enforcement effort during the forest fire.

A complete report of spring fire season activity so far this year is available [online](#).

## Managed Forest Law hearings scheduled for mid-May

*Annual hearings, scheduled for May 13, 14 and 15, set the rates for calculating taxes due on timber cut from forest lands enrolled in the Managed Forest Law program.*

The annual public hearings associated with revision of NR 46 relating to the annual stumpage values used to calculate severance and yield taxes due on timber cut during the period from November 1, 2003 through October 31, 2004 have been scheduled for May. The proposed average price change for sawtimber is a 6.7% increase over current rates while pulpwood prices, on average, decrease by 3.3%. Other proposed revisions will bring the rule into compliance with the statutory changes which occurred in 2001. The areas revised include: a change creating a permanent opportunity for landowners to convert Forest Crop Law contracts to Managed Forest Law contracts; a change in the application fee from \$20 to \$100 for landowners applying without submitting a qualifying management plan; and clarification of what constitutes a qualifying management plan. If you would like a copy of the proposed changes, contact [Linda DePaul](mailto:Linda.DePaul@dnr.state.wi.us) at 608-266-3545. Come to the hearing to present your concerns or submit written comments by May 22 to: Linda DePaul, FR/4, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI, 53707-2971. Hearings will be: **May 13, 2003** in CS/G3 Conference Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, GEF3 State Office Building, 125 S. Webster Street, Madison on Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. **May 14, 2003** in Wetland Room, Bay Beach Wildlife Area, 1660 E. Shore Drive, Green Bay on Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. **May 15, 2003** in Room 158, DNR Region Headquarters, 1300 W. Clairemont, Eau Claire on Thursday at 1:00 p.m.

*Send comments to:  
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or  
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## Comment on state forest preferred alternative now

The deadline for public comments on the Preferred Alternative for the Northern Highland - American Legion (NHAL) State Forest is **May 16, 2003**. This is an important step in the master planning process for the NHAL, the largest and most visited state property in Wisconsin. The Preferred Alternative combines input from previous stages of the planning process and proposes a management direction in land management, recreation, wild resources and boundary expansion for the NHAL State Forest, located in Oneida, Vilas and Iron Counties. Find complete information about the Preferred Alternative and directions for submitting comments at [http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/master\\_planning/nhal](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/master_planning/nhal)

*A proposed Forestry Education and Awareness Center in Milwaukee County will showcase the social, ecological and economic benefits of the 16-million-acre forest resource in Wisconsin for county residents, visitors and students.*

## Site proposed for Forestry Center in Milwaukee Co.

At the May Natural Resources Board Meeting, the Board will be asked to support the purchase of a 66-acre site for a Forestry Education and Awareness Center and Demonstration Forest. This property, on the Milwaukee County Grounds, includes a 50-acre older hardwood upland forest and unforested land that will be used for the building and demonstration areas. This site is a convenient destination location for the audiences the Center is intended to reach (school groups, residents, and tourists for the greater Milwaukee metropolitan area). The mission of the Center will be to promote awareness of the many benefits of sustainable forestry in Wisconsin. With the Natural Resources Board's support, we will go to the Joint Committee on Finance to request approval for use of funding from the Stewardship Fund to finance this acquisition. For more information contact [Wendy McCown](mailto:Wendy.McCown@dnr.state.wi.us).

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**"Wisconsin Forestry Notes" is a monthly electronic publication highlighting programs and activities of the Wisconsin DNR - Division of Forestry, Box 7921, Madison, Wisconsin 53707**  
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